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22-23 April 2004
St. Croix, United States Virgin Islands

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REPORT OF THE MEETING OF AGENCIES

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Table of Contents

| | |
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| Summary of conclusions | 1 |
| Introduction | 3 |
| Item 1 - Opening remarks | 3 |
| Item 2 - Adoption of the agenda | 3 |
| Item 3 - The operational context..... | 3 |
| Item 4 - Review of cooperation among regional and regionally-based agencies..... | 4 |
| a) The Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS POA)..... | 4 |
| b) Cooperation towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)..... | 6 |
| c) Cooperation in other areas, including the implementation of specific projects | 7 |
| d) Evaluation of scope for cooperation in the context of the activities envisaged for ECLAC/CDCC in the 2004-2005 and 2006-2007 bienniums..... | 8 |
| Item 5 - Other matters | 9 |
| Item 6 - Closure | 9 |
| Annex 1: Agenda | 10 |
| Annex 2: List of participants | 11 |

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS

The following represents a summary of the main outcomes of the meeting:

Item 4 - Review of cooperation among regional and regionally-based agencies

- a) The Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States
 - 1. Collaboration and coordination activities among agencies needs to be strengthened;
 - 2. Agencies could play a key role, particularly in resource mobilization, to assist Caribbean countries in the further implementation of the SIDS Programme of Action;
 - 3. CARICOM should take the lead in coordinating subregional activities in relation to the implementation of the SIDS Programme of Action;
 - 4. Each agency should prepare a brief overview of the activities being undertaken, as well as envisaged, in the context of the SIDS POA and, more generally, the sustainable development of Caribbean SIDS;
 - 5. The ECLAC/CDCC secretariat is to share all relevant information, particularly in connection with the final phase of preparation for SIDS + 10 with regional and regionally-based agencies; CDCC Focal Points; and Caribbean Permanent Missions in New York.
- b) Cooperation towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)
 - 1. The ECLAC/CDCC secretariat is to provide an economic overview of the subregion as a framework for the further analysis of the capacity to implement as well as to monitor the implementation of the MDGs at the national level;
 - 2. Inter-agency collaboration to support national governments in the implementation and monitoring of the MDGs should be on the agenda of heads of agencies meetings in the respective countries.
- (c) The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)-Caribbean Information Society
 - 1. The ECLAC/CDCC secretariat is to provide gap-analysis and also function as a strong advocate for deploying ICT solutions as a tool of development;
 - 2. Closer collaboration should be developed between education and the ICT sector;
 - 3. Issues related to the creation of an information society should be linked to such agreements as the WTO and the proposed FTAA;

4. Intensified collaboration with and use of the resources of the Caribbean Digital Library should be promoted;
 5. The Caribbean should strengthen its efforts to ensure effective participation in such forums as the preparatory meeting for the second phase of the WSIS which is to convene in Brazil in early 2005 and in wider international events;
 6. The ECLAC/CDCC secretariat will convene a Caribbean subregional meeting to follow up the implementation of the WSIS Plan of Action, pursuant to the mandate derived from the Global Summit held in Geneva, in 2003. The ECLAC/CDCC secretariat will also provide a subregional brief to inform participation in this meeting.
- (d) Evaluation of the scope for cooperation in the context of the activities envisaged for ECLAC/CDCC in the 2004-2005 and 2006 bienniums
1. The ECLAC/CDCC secretariat has been invited by the ACS to become more involved in the work of the Association in the area of natural disasters;
 2. Efforts should be made to undertake joint studies, especially in light of the availability of funds in the area of ICT;
 3. The ECLAC/CDCC secretariat agreed to collaborate with IICA in the preparation of a Study to Determine the Real Contribution of Agriculture to the Economy of Trinidad and Tobago.

Introduction

The Meeting of Agencies was convened by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean, secretariat of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC) on 22 April 2004 in St. Croix, United States Virgin Islands. The meeting was held in the context of the twentieth session of the CDCC which convened in St Croix over the period 22-23 April 2004.

The meeting was attended by representatives of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS); the Caribbean Community (CARICOM); the Caribbean Environmental Health Institute (CEHI); the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA); the International Telecommunications Union (ITU); the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS); the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The list of participants is attached at Annex 1.

Item 1 - Opening remarks

The Officer-in-Charge of the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat welcomed participants and outlined the main objectives of the inter-agency meeting as embracing the review of inter-agency cooperation in the Caribbean subregion; identifying areas of common interest towards enhanced collaboration; and evaluating the scope for cooperation in the implementation of the ECLAC/CDCC work programme for the 2004-2005 and 2006-2007 bienniums.

Item 2 - Adoption of the agenda

The agenda adopted by the Meeting is attached at Annex 2. A summary of the content of the interventions on the respective items is set out in the following sections.

Item 3 - The operational context

In order to provide the operational context for the discussions, the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat reviewed the recent international economic experience of the subregion together with the major activities being pursued, as well as envisaged.

In its review of economic developments in the Caribbean subregion, the secretariat drew attention to an ongoing loss of export market share and a decline in international trade which had been accompanied by slight growth in intraregional trade over recent years. However, the economic growth rates had been too modest to contribute to employment creation in the subregion. While foreign direct investment (FDI) had tended to increase, it had not been equally distributed among the several economic sectors, but was concentrated in the resource-based economies of the subregion.

With respect to activities carried out in the area of social development, the main areas of focus addressed the increasing incidence of poverty; the gender-dimensions of Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS); and the brain-drain, in the specific context of the emigration of professionals, particularly in the health and teaching sectors. The meeting was informed that the extent of poverty varied considerably within the subregion, ranging from 21% to 61% of the population of the respective countries. Participants were reminded of the fact that the Caribbean subregion had the highest HIV/AIDS infection rate outside Sub-Saharan Africa.

In the area of population and development, the secretariat highlighted its core activities:

(a) The Caribbean Subregional Meeting to Assess the Implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) 10 years after its Adoption, which was held in Port of Spain, on 11-12 November 2003.

(b) Population ageing in the subregion: The secretariat briefly reported on the Second World Assembly on Ageing, Madrid, 2002; the Regional Intergovernmental Conference on Ageing, Santiago, Chile, November 2003; and the Regional Strategy adopted at the Santiago Conference for the implementation of the commitments made in Madrid. The session was also informed of efforts by the secretariat to organize a follow-up meeting to discuss the regional strategy and to translate it into a programme of action for the Caribbean. Of particular concern in this regard were the provision of pension schemes and the need for social welfare programmes, including the provision of health care services to the elderly.

(c) The issue of migration was not a new phenomenon in the subregion but one which had a long history that involved almost all sectors of the society. The phenomenon was to be observed within countries, within the subregion, as well as to third countries. Of particular concern was the ongoing brain-drain, as reflected in the emigration of professionals in the health and education sectors, with serious implications for the provision of the corresponding services to the people of the subregion. The secretariat also reported on its ongoing collaboration with the Pan American Health Organization/Caribbean Programme Coordination (PAHO/CPC) and the Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery (CRNM) to develop a joint approach to the forthcoming General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) negotiations, particularly in relation to Mode IV, relating to the movement of natural persons.

The secretariat also reported on its collaboration with other agencies, particularly CARICOM and UNDP in the area of social development. It, however, observed that such collaboration, though beneficial, was yet to attain its optimum level.

Item 4 - Review of cooperation among regional and regionally-based agencies

a) The Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS POA);

The secretariat reviewed recent developments with respect to the preparation of the Caribbean subregion for the International Meeting to review the Implementation of the

Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, to be convened, in Mauritius, from 30 August to 3 September 2004. The major milestones in Caribbean subregional preparations for that global event were identified by reference to the following:

(a) The ECLAC-sponsored Joint Meeting of Caribbean SIDS and representatives of the agencies members of the Inter-Agency Collaborative Group (IACG), which convened in San Juan, Puerto Rico, on 11 April 2003;

(b) The CARICOM-sponsored Regional Meeting to develop a follow-up strategy for the Caribbean for the World Summit on Sustainable Development and preparations for the 10-year review of the Barbados Programme of Action; and

(c) The United Nations-sponsored Caribbean Regional Preparatory Meeting, held in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, on 6-10 October 2003.

Reference was also made to the United Nations-sponsored Interregional Preparatory Meeting for the 10-year review of the Barbados Programme of Action, held in Nassau, The Bahamas, 26-30 January 2004, which adopted the Nassau Declaration and the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action. The consolidated outcomes of the preceding meetings had been transmitted to the Interregional Meeting as the Caribbean contribution to the global preparatory process.

Referring to the International Preparatory Conference for the International Meeting which took place in the context of the twelfth session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-12), on 14-16 April 2004, in New York, the secretariat reported that the final documents adopted at the Interregional Meeting in Nassau had since been adopted by the Group of 77 and China as the basis for negotiation with the other members of the international community. In the event, the documents had found little favour with the developed countries which had challenged the need for the designation of SIDS as a new category of State and, also, the extent of the responsibility envisaged by SIDS for the international community with regard to the provision of resources in support of the sustainable development of SIDS. A number of perspectives were also shared with respect to the manner in which the remaining phase of Caribbean preparation might be pursued.

The meeting was further informed that given the considerable degree of disagreement on the content of the documentation to be presented in Mauritius, arrangements had been made for informal consultations on 28-29 August 2004, in Mauritius, if deemed necessary.

Following the presentation by the secretariat, representatives of a number of agencies expressed the view that, due to their essential exclusion from active roles in the preparatory process for the International Meeting, opportunities to join activities in the implementation of the SIDS POA had been missed. It was suggested that, notwithstanding the fact that collaboration and coordination of activities among agencies needed to be strengthened, the agencies could nevertheless play a key role, particularly in resource mobilization, to assist the countries of the subregion in the further implementation of the SIDS POA.

The representative of UNEP informed the meeting that his organization was in the process of establishing a SIDS Office in The Bahamas.

The representative of CARICOM reported that her organization was engaged in a review of the scope of the action undertaken by agencies in support of the subregion.

It was suggested that CARICOM take the lead in coordinating subregional activities in relation to the implementation of the SIDS POA.

The ECLAC/CDCC secretariat suggested that each agency should prepare a brief overview of activities being undertaken as well as envisaged in the context of the SIDS POA and, more generally, the sustainable development of Caribbean SIDS. It undertook to share all relevant information, particularly in connection with the final phase of Caribbean preparation for the Mauritius Meeting, with the other regional and regionally-based agencies and also with the CDCC Focal Points and Permanent Missions, in New York. This proposal was endorsed by all agency representatives.

b) Cooperation towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

The secretariat provided an introduction to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and their relevance to its work. A report was also presented on the Regional Conference for the promotion of Sustainable Human Development through the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. This meeting was convened by UNDP in Barbados on 7-9 July 2003 to discuss mechanisms and gaps in the monitoring of the implementation of the MDGs. UNDP was recognised as the lead agency in the provision of technical assistance to member countries in this regard.

The representative of UNDP informed the meeting that its core areas of activity spanned the provision of support to governments in the preparation of their national MDG reports, capacity-strengthening of national central statistical offices in the areas of data collection and data management, as well as continued advocacy work.

The ECLAC/CDCC secretariat observed that, with reference to the global indicators, the Caribbean seemed to present a brighter picture that did not quite reflect reality. The secretariat had therefore embarked on efforts to strengthen national capacity in social data collection and analysis. The secretariat also reported on its efforts to create a social statistics database; and to develop a social vulnerability index to capture the Caribbean realities more adequately. The secretariat further stressed its continued and close collaboration and coordination with other agencies, such as CARICOM and UNDP.

The representative of the OECS provided information on a project that was being jointly implemented with UNDP to adapt the MDGs to the specific needs of the OECS subregion.

The representative of UNEP informed the meeting of his organization's projects related to the implementation of the MDGs in the area of environmental sustainability. The activities of

UNEP in the subregion were focused on integrated watershed and water management; water and sanitation; and water, health and poverty.

The ECLAC/CDCC secretariat offered to provide an economic overview of the subregion as a framework for the further analysis of the capacity to implement as well as to monitor the implementation of the MDGs at the national level. It was further proposed that inter-agency collaboration to support the national governments in the implementation, as well as monitoring of the MDGs, be further discussed at the level of Heads of Agencies Meetings in the respective countries.

c) *Cooperation in other areas, including the implementation of specific projects*

The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) - Caribbean Information Society

The secretariat informed the meeting of activities envisaged in preparation for the second session of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), which is to convene in Tunis, 16-18 November 2005. A draft project proposal, "*Caribbean Information Society: Proposal to support the transition*", had been prepared to assist the subregion in the implementation of the Plan of Action that was adopted at the first phase of the WSIS which convened in Geneva in December 2003. The activities identified within the draft project proposal spanned the compilation of a regional Information and Telecommunications Technology (ICT) status report; the convening of a stakeholders meeting to identify obstacles to the implementation of the Plan of Action; the conduct of broad-based national consultations in each CDCC member country; compilation of ICT country profiles; the production of a film showcasing the achievements of young technopreneurs; and the further development of the Caribbean Digital Library, an ongoing programme of the Caribbean Documentation Centre. Funding for the implementation of the draft project proposal was still being sought.

The ECLAC/CDCC secretariat recognized that several agencies in the subregion, such as the ITU, which had the lead role in this sector, and also the OECS and CARICOM, had carried out programme activities in the area of information and communications technology. In this regard, it was emphasized that the intention of ECLAC was to complement rather than duplicate those initiatives. ECLAC would wish to focus on strengthening the link between ICT and development. To this end, the secretariat had been involved in linking its work to tertiary institutions through the setting up of video-conferencing institutions. It would also provide gap-analysis and function as a strong advocate for deploying ICT solutions as a development tool.

Following the presentation by the secretariat, the representatives of the agencies expressed the need for closer collaboration between education and the ICT sector in the Caribbean and also the need to link the information society to institutions such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA).

The representative of UNDP announced the availability of funding to advance the ICT agenda and to promote activities, such as e-commerce, in the subregion. The meeting was also informed that the European Union was planning a conference on ICT in Barbados for the OECS countries.

The representative of the OECS reported on her organization's ongoing collaboration with UNDP, towards the establishment of tele-centres in rural areas. She encouraged intensified collaboration and greater use of the resources provided by the Caribbean Digital Library.

The ECLAC/CDCC secretariat informed the meeting of a preparatory meeting to be convened in Brazil, early in 2005, in connection with the second session of the World Summit on the Information Society and suggested that the Caribbean would need to strengthen its efforts to ensure its effective and efficient participation in such regional and wider international events.

Based on the mandate derived from the Global Summit held in Geneva, in 2003, the secretariat proposed to follow up on the implementation of the Plan of Action and convene a subregional meeting for the Caribbean. This proposal was supported by all agencies present and it was agreed that the secretariat would provide a regional brief for this Caribbean meeting.

d) Evaluation of scope for cooperation in the context of the activities envisaged for ECLAC/CDCC in the 2004-2005 and 2006-2007 bienniums

The ECLAC/CDCC secretariat presented a brief overview of the work programme for the 2004-2005 biennium and invited the agencies to identify areas for possible collaboration.

The representative of the ACS commended the secretariat for its support of the activities of the Association during the past years and looked forward to increasing support during the next two bienniums. He invited ECLAC/CDCC to become more involved in the work the Association in the area of natural disasters and informed the meeting that the document Main trade trends, trade policy and integration agreements of the countries of the ACS, (LC/CAR/G.756), a collaborative effort of the ACS and ECLAC/CDCC, would be launched in the coming weeks. He provided details of the integrated systems being developed by the ACS Secretariat, especially, in relation to the port and maritime database.

Referring to the White-Water-to-Blue-Water initiative, the representative of UNEP proposed that attention be also directed to issues identified in the Oil Spill Protocol to the Cartagena Convention as it related to the cruise ship industry. Reference was also made to the Blue Flag Programme and to the environmental standards it embodied in relation to the activities of hotels.

The representative of the OECS proposed that an attempt should be made to undertake studies and projects on a joint basis, noting that funds were readily available to finance activities in the area of ICT.

The representative of IICA informed the meeting that it would be approaching the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat for support in the preparation of "A study to determine the Real Contribution of the Agricultural Sector to the Economy of Trinidad and Tobago". He explained that the methodology would be based on the Social Accounting Matrix (SAM). He also informed the meeting of an IICA proposal to convene a consultative group to consider and review issues related to bio-agricultural development. The ECLAC/CDCC secretariat welcomed the opportunity to be associated with the study.

The ECLAC/CDCC secretariat assured the meeting of its commitment to the provision of technical cooperation within the budgetary allocations at its disposal.

It was agreed that discussions on the work plan for the 2006-2007 biennium would be deferred to the plenary sessions when the corresponding agenda item was taken.

Item 5 - Other matters

No matters were raised under this item.

Item 6 - Closure

The secretariat thanked all representatives for their active participation and declared the meeting closed.

Annex 1

AGENDA

1. Opening remarks by the Officer in Charge, ECLAC Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean
2. Remarks by representatives of ECLAC Headquarters, Santiago, Chile
3. Review of cooperation among regional and regionally-based agencies:
 - a) The Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS POA);
 - b) Cooperation towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs);
 - c) Cooperation in other areas, including the implementation of specific projects;
 - d) Evaluation of scope for cooperation in the context of the activities envisaged for ECLAC/CDCC in the 2004-2005 and 2006-2007 bienniums.
4. Other matters
5. Closure

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C. ECLAC system

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